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Washington Post
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Wash., D.C. 20005

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Philippi case

Dear Goerge,

I'm sorry I dod not know you were working on the Project Jennifer story until I read it this morning.

If I had I'd have suggested that you go over the Post of the period and ask yourself if the CIA was hurt or helped by the story breaking when it did.

At the time I was interested in it for other reasons than the kind of story it eventually did make.

My own experience with claims to secrecy for "national security" are by now fairly extensive. In no case in which I have obtained any single record among the thousands of pages I have obtained have I found a single instance of real national security.

Secrecy is the heart and soul of spooking, so there can be a genuine dedication to keeping information secret when the need does not exist.

However, the way that one ended I was sure that Colby's whirlwind tour of the time was in the certainty the story would break with the CIA giving every ~~effort~~ indication of maximum effort to prevent publication.

Or, a new kind of leak when leaking would have been a potential disaster.

The CIA then has serious problems.

That story, I believe, represented the beginning of their turning it all around.

I recall some of my own thinking of the time well enough and some of my correspondence on it with a friend then recently retired after a long career with AP.

There is no possibility something as big as that ship sitting dead on the water as long as it had to was secret. There is no possibility the Russians did not know about where their sub was lost.

In Eisenhower's day satellite photos were good enough to show roadstripes from 200 milesup. The ship was larger and that was much later.

The secret was not from foreign intelligence agencies. It was from the American people and the Congress.

When it stopped being a secret the timing could not have been better for the CIA is my recollection is accurate.

Nonetheless a good story.

Best,